

May 27, 1956

Dear Dr. Pollock:

May I ask the favor of a subculture of your *B. cereus* 5/B, which Dr. Torriani tells me is an ideal source for penicillinase (which we require for some experiments with *E. coli* in progress). May I take the occasion to ask you also for the sensitive parent, strain 5, not for myself, but for Professor Johnson (if I can convince him to use this material for some aspects of his studies on the mechanism of penicillin action.)

I need hardly mention that I very much appreciate the reprints which you have continued to exchange.

I tried to get Torriani to quote her views, or yours, on the "normal function" of penicillinase, if there is such a thing. I gather it is extremely specific, both in substrate and inducibility patterns (do you have an extensive discussion of this in print— I couldn't find it in a cursory search through your reprints); does this mean that its occurrence in *B. cereus* is ecologically related to the occurrence of penicillin in the soil; or is penicillinase somehow the normal target of penicillin, serving some other function?

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

